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POPULAR VIOLENCE in HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

INTRO. Pop. violence? — Collective Vilence of "Deprived Groups" (GURR);
NOT (a) Gov. or instit'ed violence, eg The Terror; nor
(b) Opposing factions in Civil wars eg Lebanon or N. Ireland.
But if were to include militaeised formations, I wd have to include both PARLIAMENT v, CHARLES I & Canadiens of 1837-8; and (most certainly) Rhodesian guerillas v. Ian Smith.

I. Violence - an elastic term

1. In its lunatic form NIXON & John MITCHELL on shootings at Kent State. University
A case of DOUBLE-SPEAK (Orwell) Case of Double-Speak

2. In another aense "elastic" or "varied" re difference in NATURE or SCALE of vilence in differeent hist. situations:
So all difference in world between (say):
(1) At one end of scale: mutual extermination in race riots; savgery of peasant rebellions - eg PUGACHEV & Jacqueries in France; September Massacres in F.Rev.

(2) Destruction (often massive) of PROPERTY in Urban Riots, eg GORDON; Reveillon; Bristol; Potteries. [More of this more "muted" protest later]

(3) (at other end of scale), stone-throwing demonstrators, burning-in-effigy; or even so-called "vilence of "Non-Violent" passive resistance to civil authority of Ghandian movement in India, Buddhists in Vietnam etc.
So POPULAR VIOLENCE, in its different forms, a consid. elememt in pop. protest - even if not as common as APPLE PIE (Rap Brown).

II. WHY does VIOLENCE Occur?

Many explanatiosn:

1. The "psycho" explanations:
In case of individuals, violent behaviour a release from tension or a way of canalising innate aggressive instincts.
Objection: Collective behaviour not the same as Individual behaviour writ large. War & aggressive instincts of small boys with elastic catapults?

2. So we have Gustave LEBON, "father" of crowd psychol (c. 1910):
"Collective mentality". But spolied his cased with "common level pf bestiality"
So Crowd becomes, by definition, FICKLE, IRRATIONAL - and VIOLENT.

3. Next the "Break-down" theorists (Tilly):
(1) E. DURKHEIM, author of Le Suicide: violence (inc. pop. collective violence) the result of ANOMIE, provoked by breakdown in societal norms.
(2) L. Chevalier (Classes dang & lab..) : violence - both CRIME and REBELLION the result of inflow into great cities of "uprooted" nomads who wage war on settled population. So violence of crime & violence of protest become intimately linked.

4. More sophisticated scholars from US:
(1) Ted GURR, politico author Why Men Rebel. Why violence? intensity of RD (= relative deprivation) see pp. 22-91.
also Discusses origins & utility of violence.
Among Origins, import. attached to transmission of notion of violence by leaders:
Cult of violence: (a) Violence as a virtue or "cleanser" in Sorel; Fanon.
(b) Vilence in slogans as prelude to violence in deeds. [Not always so..../ As we shall see].

4. (cont.)

(2). Tilly etc. [sociologist + historian] studies in collective "violence" - inc. Rebellious Century '30-30'. Treats violence - unlike others - in historical perspective.

e.g. 1/ Violence as contin. of politics by other means (Clausewitz). not as thing-in-itself (Fanon, Sorel) switched on accord. to by command or precept: FANON; SOREL.

2/ Violence not as an end in itself (Fanon), but a last resort; e.g. minority groups without polit. muscle thru ballot to offer other options.

3/ Violence grows out of interaction of organised groups - i.e viol. occurs where one potentially violent group resisted by another (Contender/challenger theory).

e,g. Police brutality as stimuls to violence, not as appeaser (unless overwhelming strong).

4. Possible to have unviolent revolution? Why not in theory? See 1688. See 1st days of Oct. 1917...

Note: These conclusions arrived at by historical. ie historical method of of enquiry - based on empirical evidence (sOc., econ., ploit. factors - i.e. by inductive process; not dedudctive as LEBON, CHEVALIER, DURKHEIM.

5. For myself: also concerned - like Tillys - to study violence in terms of WHAT and HOW before raising question WHY?

My only criticisms of T.:

(a) Term "collective violence" for "collective protest" confuses issue as "violence" is only a part;

(b) Neglect of IDEOLOGY (computer?)

I also intend to present collective protest (of which violence a part) as a socio-historical phenomenon varying accord. to the type of society & changing as society changes.

Specifically, will concentrate on century bwfore Tillys', i.e. 1750-1850, or roughly the 'pre-industrial' period in France & England (most of my examples).

Note. 'Pre-industrial' also a relative term: obviuosly not the same for Africa, Asia, abor. Aust., Latin America as for W. WEurope or N. America.

III. Protest (including violence) in Pre-Industrial Society

1. I have argued elsewhere: nature of pre-industrial crowd (in its w. European manifestations, tho I believe it has a wider relevance besides) may [for convenience] be classified under 7 heads:

1. Types of protest
2. Types of behaviour of protesters
3. Spontaneity - or organisation?
4. Leadership
5. Who were the followers?
6. Motives and Ideology
+ 7. Discrimination in choice of targets - or irrationality à la Lebon?

Importance of factor social control as stimulation or stimulating violent outbreaks

2. Broadly, my findings [extension of behaviour] were:

1) Types of protest: Food Riots, Strikes (only in Fr. & Eng.), rebellions & insurrections, - even revolutions (1789, 1830. 1848 in France). But prevailing type - up to 1815 at least - the FOOD RIOT. → WHY?

2) Types of Behaviour:

(a) Sometimes peaceful. eg marches, petitions, parades - partic in large Cities

But (b) More often & more typically, Violent dectruction of property - M/breaking in ind; usually attacks on houses (urban) - i.e "Hostile outburst (Neil Smelser)